

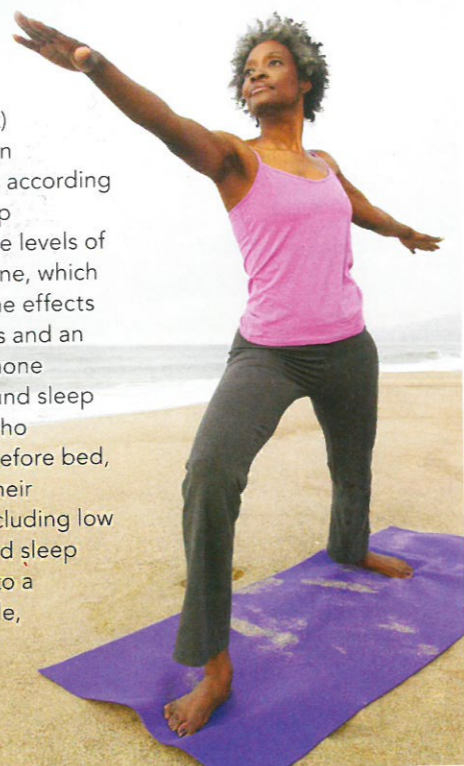
MOSTLY A Swimming

Feeling hot and bothered? A dip in the pool could be the answer. As well as cooling you and avoiding the sweatiness of a fitness class, swimming is low impact and so it won't put your joints (which are usually strengthened by oestrogen) under pressure.

Hot flushes are made worse by stress, and the meditative, soothing movements will help keep you calm. Doing at least three 30-minute exercise sessions a week, including swimming, jogging or walking, makes you a third less likely to get hot flushes, according to a study in the journal *Menopause*. The benefits don't end there – swimming has been found to counteract fat around the middle as well as potentially preventing cardiovascular diseases associated with menopause too.

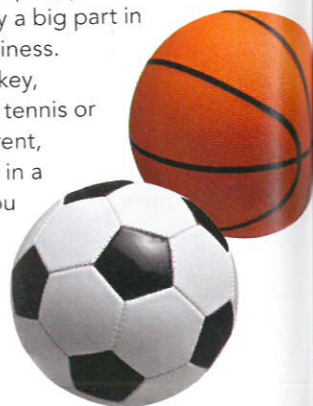
MOSTLY B Yoga

More than half (61 per cent) of post-menopausal women report insomnia symptoms according to America's National Sleep Foundation. This is because levels of oestrogen and progesterone, which help you sleep, decline. The effects of hot flushes, night sweats and an increase in the stress hormone cortisol don't make for sound sleep either. However, women who stretched for 10 minutes before bed, five times a week, found their menopausal symptoms including low mood, aches and disrupted sleep were reduced, according to a Japanese study. Meanwhile, yoga exercises have been shown to reduce night sweats, according to an Indian study.



MOSTLY C Team sport

If your self-confidence has taken a bashing, or you're feeling stuck in a rut and want to get out and about more, signing up for a team sport could do wonders for your mood. People playing sport in a team gain not only physical benefits from exercise, but are also more satisfied with their lives, compared to those training solo, according to a report by the London School of Economics. The authors suggest that the social element of sports and developing personal relationships play a big part in day-to-day happiness. Whether it's hockey, football, netball, tennis or something different, getting involved in a team will give you a sense of belonging and could lead to new friendships.



MOSTLY D Zumba

Feeling blue? Put the oomph back into your life with Zumba! This fast-paced dance class is suitable for all levels, and it's been proven to have positive social and psychological benefits, according to researchers at the University of Granada – after all, it's hard to shimmy around to Latin rhythms without a smile. It won't even feel like a workout, but you'll be burning 9.5 calories a minute. Regular classes were found to reduce the weight and BMI of overweight women, as well as lowering blood pressure and resting heart rate, according to Italian research.

MOSTLY E Weight lifting

If you want to feel strong and empowered at any age, weight training could be the answer. Lifting weights is an incredible way to bolster your body by maintaining and strengthening muscle mass and bone density. And no, you won't get bulky – it's the testosterone in men that creates Popeye-style arms! Strengthening your bones becomes extra important in the

five to seven years after the menopause, when they could lose up to 20 per cent of their density as your oestrogen levels drop. Any kind of weight-bearing exercise is great for your bones, as well as building and maintaining your muscles. As little as 12 minutes of weight-bearing exercise three days a week can reduce your risk of osteoporosis and increase bone density, according to a study from the University of Michigan.

EMBRACE
THE
CHANGE

MOSTLY F Pilates

Pilates, named by researcher Dr Helen Jones as 'a natural alternative to HRT' during a 2016 study, is a great all-rounder, so if you're experiencing hot flushes or anxiety, it's worth giving it a go. Just eight weeks of regular sessions led to a 'significant decrease' in most menopausal symptoms in a 2016 study. It's also a good way to ensure good health in later life, as it improves balance, reducing the risk of falls in postmenopausal women, according to Spanish research.



Pilates has been found to ease a whole range of symptoms

TopSanté PROMOTION

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symptoms of vaginal dryness, menopausal vaginal atrophy and painful sex. Available in a 100ml tube (RRP: £9.99), packs of 6 or 30 single-use applicators (RRP: £11.99/£37.99) and on UK NHS prescription. Visit yesyesyes.org for information.

